



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**

Walla Walla District
Public Affairs Office

News Release

News Release 06-17

Date: March 28, 2006

Contact: Dworshak Natural
Resource Office

Phone: (208) 476-1255

Vandals strike Dworshak facilities; damage may delay campground opening

OROFINO, Idaho – U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' park rangers and local law enforcement have stepped up patrols at Dworshak Dam and Reservoir recreation areas in response to recent vandalism.

During the week of March 6, a public restroom and an information kiosk at Canyon Creek on the reservoir were shot by vandals. Not far from the restroom, mature grand fir trees were cut down, according Dworshak officials.

"We've restricted access to the Canyon Creek camping area while we clean things up," said Mike Deitrick, park manager at Dworshak. "It's a shame when everybody has to pay the price for the actions of a few vandals."

Deitrick said the property damage in the campground could cause a short delay in opening that area to visitors. The campground was slated to open April 1, but materials needed to make repairs may not arrive in time to prepare the campground for guests.

It's is a sight that's becoming all too common. Every summer defaced property at Dworshak adds up to an ugly, expensive problem. Damage ranged from defaced signs, to cut fences, to spray-painted structures.

"Last year, it cost the taxpayers thousands of dollars to clean up property damage caused by vandals," said Deitrick. "We work hard to keep our recreation areas and reservoir attractive and safe for our visitors. The vandalism destroys places where children and families can come and enjoy themselves. I can't imagine why anyone would want to destroy public property just for fun."

Penalties for vandalism can range from a simple misdemeanor to a Class-B felony, with fines and jail time possible for severe cases, according to law enforcement officials at the Clearwater County Sheriffs Office.

Corps officials encourage visitors to help them keep an eye on the more than 200 recreation sites located throughout Dworshak's 30,000 acres. If visitors see any damage or vandalism, they can call the sheriff's office at (208) 476-4521, or Dworshak personnel at (208) 476-1255.

"We have four park rangers to patrol almost 30,000 acres," said Deitrick. "We can use all the help we can get to keep this reservoir safe, clean and free of vandalism."

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Public Affairs Office, Walla Walla District Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 201 N. Third Ave, Walla Walla, WA 99362-1876

Phone (509) 527-7020 FAX (509) 527-7824

Website: www.nwww.usace.army.mil

E-mail: cenww-pa@usace.army.mil